REMARKS

The present response amends claims 1 and 6, cancels claims 7-8 without prejudice and requests reconsideration of the rejected claims.

1. The Action requests affirmation of the election of claims 1-6. The election is affirmed. Withdrawn claims 7-8 are cancelled herein without prejudice. A divisional application is being filed to prosecute these claims.

2. The disclosure is objected to for, e.g., "(both ex Croda)" on page 7, l.8, and similar terminology in the specification. This language refers to the examples being available from Croda (and other sources as the case may be). The specification is amended herein to further clarify the meaning of this language without the addition of new matter thereby.

The disclosure is also objected to for the language "5 cm^2 x 1-2 mm". It is respectfully submitted that this language is perfectly clear on its face and the basis for the objection is not understood.

3. The Action requests a more descriptive title. The present response amends the title to be more descriptive.

4. Claim 6 is objected to. The present response amends claim 6 to incorporate the Examiner's suggestion. Such amendment does not change the scope of claim 6 and, thus, does not narrow the same.

5. Claims 1-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, for the recitation of "wood-like".

The claims are intended to cover substrates which are wooden and/or cellulose-containing. These recited terms are considered sufficiently broad to cover the intended scope of the claims (the invention), so that the term "wood-like" can be

deleted from claim 1. For example, the recited term "cellulose-containing" would also include wood veneers, impregnated paper, reconstituted wood substrates and plastic covered with paper.

6. Claims 1-3 and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable based on Sheets. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In the Action, the Examiner admits that Sheets does not disclose applying a top coat after curing a press coat, curing the top coat subsequently, applying and curing a primer coat prior to application of the top coat, the degree of compression of the substrate, or the production apparatus. This lack of disclosure shows that the claimed invention is something different from the cited references.

Specifically, the claimed invention applies a coating (press coating) to a wooden and/or cellulosic substrate and then applies heat and pressure to cure the coating. In contrast, the reference applies a coating to paper and then applies the coated paper to a hardboard substrate. This is explained in more detail below.

Many benefits are realized as a result of the press coating process of the claimed invention. These include, e.g., sealing the surface of the substrate so it absorbs less paint (page 3, l. 26-27) and preventing radiation curable coatings from penetrating the pores of the substrate where they cannot be cured Page 6, l. 16-25). These and other benefits are summarized on page 12 of the specification.

Sheets relates to a process for manufacturing pre-finished hardboard product. A pre-finished hardboard product is hardboard that has been treated. As disclosed in column 1, lines 23-26, hardboard can be made by consolidating lingo-cellulosic fibres under pressure in a press. Such process is also discussed in the present application, page 1, lines 19-23. Sheets mentions at column 1, lines 20-23, that pre-finished hardboards can be made by coating hardboards with one or more primer coatings and topcoats. One of the subjects that Sheets deals with is the problem that

a (pre-finished) hardboard surface should not absorb too much paint when coated to make the end product, see lines 34-40.

Sheets teaches to laminate a paper to the fibreboard. This paper is resin impregnated and is adhesive backed. Further, it is primed with the primer/sealer of Sheets. The primed dried paper can be laminated to the fibreboard by heat and high pressure in a suitable press, see column 1, lines 53-60. The advantage of the primer/sealer with which the paper is primed is said to be that it does not pick or stick to the press plate that is used in the lamination step (see column 2, lines 19-28).

The current process, on the other hand, relates to applying a press coat to a wooden or cellulose-containing substrate (not applying a primed overlayer paper to a wooden or cellulose-containing substrate). This wooden or cellulose-containing substrate may, for instance, be impregnated paper, or a substrate comprising paper laminated on top of something else. Heat and pressure are applied to cure the press coating, to obtain a substrate with a smooth coating film. Next, a top coat is applied and cured.

Sheets uses a relatively large number of process steps to obtain a smooth surface on a hardboard product. The overlay paper is primed and dried. At column 1, line 56, it is also indicated that the overlay paper is adhesive backed. In a later step, the overlay paper is laminated on the hardboard by placing the paper on the substrate followed by a heat and pressure step. In the current process, on the other hand, a smooth surface is obtained by applying, drying, and curing a press coating. This, thus, requires fewer process steps.

7. Claims 4 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable based on Sheets in view of Cooley. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Cooley relates to a process in which a substrate of a wood base material such as particle board, MDF, hardboard or plywood is sanded, covered with an adhesive, and covered with a decorative paper. Then, isocyanate solution is placed on top of the paper and is allowed to penetrate into the paper. Finally, a UV curable top coat may be applied.

A combination of Sheets with Cooley would not result in the process of the current invention, since they both relate to a different kind of process. Sheets and Cooley both laminate hardboard (or similar substrates) with paper to obtain a smooth surface. This is in contrast to applying a press coat to obtain a smooth surface, as in the claimed invention.

Respectfully submitted,

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